

22 March 1977

NOTE FOR: DDCI

STAT

There are two interrelated areas involving the release of CIA information in which [] could play a key role. Paradoxically, on the one hand we are feeling our way towards greater openness in making finished intelligence accessible. On the other hand, we have a serious problem in establishing and maintaining standards for the release of information of all kinds, especially that which we may be legally obligated to release. In both instances, responsibility probably should be centralized in your office - although the case for this is stronger in the second than in the first.

I. The DCI has defined as one of his four major priorities the restoration of credibility and luster to CIA and the Community. To accomplish this, he envisages a more active program to make our product available to the Cabinet, the Congress and the public. In fact, there has been a significant expansion in the last two years in the amount of finished Agency material released to the public, substantive briefings - written and oral - of Congressional members and committees, and support to some non-foreign policy/security Cabinet members. More can be done; the burden of the effort will fall on the DDI.

Leadership and oversight from the Office of the DCI/DDCI is required in the following areas:

a. How much and what kind of information should be released to the public on sensitive matters such as our assessment of Soviet strategic capabilities and plans? For example, some have argued that the DCI should prepare a public position paper to accompany the SECDEF defense posture paper.

b. To what extent is it feasible to review finished intelligence memoranda for sanitization and release?

c. Should sanitized and unclassified papers be shown to State before release, and if the answer is affirmative in some cases, what guidelines should apply?

d. Development of guidelines for an expansion of support to Congress.

e. Development of guidelines for support to Cabinet members not traditionally serviced. This could be a major task, involving exploratory talks with departmental representatives to define priorities and requirements and to determine the extent to which our resources permit a response.

f. How do we find ways to assure better accessibility by scholars and others to the rather significant amount of information already made available, for example through DOCEX?

It is my impression that the DDI has gone all out to be responsive on the Congressional front, and it will now do all it can to respond to the DCI's desire to look at the needs of all Cabinet members. The list of our unclassified publications is also impressive. But we do need to define more sharply what are our objectives, establish reasonable guidelines to accomplish them, work closely with the DDI to assure that in the process the circuit does not get overloaded, develop and maintain channels to be aware of State sensitivities and provide a means for you to monitor and oversee the effort. You could delegate the responsibility to the DDI, but since OLC, A/DCI and other officers with responsibility for releasing information (see below) are involved, there is a strong case for providing for leadership directly from your office, at least initially.

II. The IG is now doing a survey of CIA release of information to the public. It has already identified 13 types of releases. FOIC, Privacy Act, declassification, court proceedings, briefings of Congress, the media, academia, etc. There is no comprehensive system for managing the outflow of unclassified or declassified information. There is concern that material is being released that should remain classified; that, we are releasing more than is required; and, that the cumulative effect of releases will have an adverse impact on intelligence and foreign relations equities.

The IG report is due at the end of April. But we already know that we need to improve Agency control of the release of information. The IG will probably recommend consideration of:

- a. Creation of a central record of all information released to the public.
- b. Creation of a central information review staff.
- c. Development of internal guidelines covering information releases.

STAT This problem is of course related to I above, but it is far larger in scope. Whatever action you decide to take, perhaps after EAG review, will need to be managed from your office. It is not a one man job. [] recently discussed with [] the possibility of directing it from the Office of the A/DCI, with a couple DDO bodies to assist. I understand STAT [] reluctantly agreed "in principle". In view of developments, it might make a lot more sense to have this handled by a separate office under STAT [] reporting directly to you. Even if the A/DCI were not new and inexperienced, I question the advisability of putting this task in the A/DCI's office.

STAT Suggestion: One possibility would be to ask [] on behalf of yourself and DCI, to assist DDI in addressing the problems outlined in I above. This could provide a means for you to give special focus and attention to the effort at this time when the DCI is anxious to see visible signs of progress. But I doubt that it is a suitable permanent assignment for [] It needs to be institutionalized, I should think, in the DDI.

STAT In time, as we work our way towards establishing a mechanism to confront the problem all too briefly described in II above, I should think [] is an ideal candidate to help us design and implement a suitable mechanism.

[]

A/DDCI